

Message Text

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ACTION SIL-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 EUR-25 EA-11 IO-15 ISO-00 CIAE-00

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PM-07 H-03 L-03 NSC-10 PA-03 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 AF-10 NEA-10 DRC-01 /197 W

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INFO AMEMBASSY BERN

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AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

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AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USMISSION GENEVA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SGEN, EEC

SUBJECT: WCL CONGRESS MARRED BY CONFLICT

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REF: A. EC BRUSSELS 5318 (NOTAL); B. PARIS 25418

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. APPROXIMATELY 200 DELEGATES FROM 70 COUNTRIES
ATTENDED THE 18TH CONGRESS OF THE WORLD CONFEDERATION OF LABOR

(WCL) AT EVIAN, FRANCE, SEPTEMBER 25-28. CANADIAN MARCEL PEPIN WAS ELECTED WCL PRESIDENT AND JEAN BRUCK WAS REELECTED GENERAL SECRETARY. A CONTROVERSIAL REPORT ENTITLED "SOLIDARITY AND LIBERATION, PROSPECTS AND BASES FOR A WCL STRATEGY" BY WCL LATIN AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVE EMILO MASPERO SERVED AS THE PRINCIPAL WORKING DOCUMENT OF THE CONGRESS. THE CONGRESS WHICH HAD PROMISED TO BE AN UNEVENTFUL AFFAIR, WAS PROFOUNDLY SHAKEN BY A SIERY OPENING ADDRESS BY FRENCH CFDT SECRETARY GENERAL EDMOND MAIRE (SEE REF B). MOST DELEGATES CONSIDERED HIS ADDRESS AN AFFRONT AND ACCUSED MAIRE OF SEEKING TO UNDERMINE THE WCL. THE EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION OF THE WCL (EO-WCL) DID NOT HOLD A FORMAL MEETING AT EVIAN BUT THE QUESTION OF AFFILIATION WITH THE ETUC WAS WIDELY DISCUSSED AMONG EO-WCL LEADERS. END SUMMARY.

2. AT THE SEPTEMBER 25 OPENING SESSION OF THE WCL CONGRESS, MAIRE, AS HEAD OF THE HOST COUNTRY UNION, DELIVERED A SPEECH WHICH WAS UNDOUBTEDLY ONE OF THE MOST REALISTIC AND AT THE SAME TIME POORLY RECEIVED SPEECHES IN THE ANNALS OF WCL CONGRESSES. HE HAD FOREWARNED THE WCL SECRETARIAT THAT HIS SPEECH WOULD BE CRITICAL OF THE WCL BUT FEW OF THE DELEGATES WERE PREPARED FOR HIS MESSAGE AND NEARLY ALL REACTED BITTERLY. ACCORDING TO EYEWITNESSES, EDUARDO GARCIA, CUBAN EXILE AND SUB-SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE LATIN AMERICAN CONFEDERATION OF WORKERS (CLAT) ANGRILY SHOOK MAIRE BY HIS LAPELS AFTER THE SPEECH.

3. MAIRE PULLED FEW PUNCHES IN PAINTING A PICTURE OF A WEAK AND INCONSEQUENTIAL WCL ADrift BETWEEN THE MAJOR TRADE UNION POWER BLOCS IN THE WORLD. HE CHARGED THAT THE WCL LACKED ANY VIABLE STRATEGY FOR MEETING THE THREAT OF INTERNATIONAL CAPITALISM AND FOR DEALING WITH THE SOVIET CONTROLLED WFTU IN THE THIRD WORLD. HE SUGGESTED THE WCL SHOULD BE READY TO DISSOLVE ITSELF IN THE INTEREST OF UNIFYING INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENTS WHICH WOULD BE ACTION ORIENTED RATHER THAN IDEOLOGICAL. MAIRE INCURRED THE WRATH OF THE LATIN AMERICANS WHEN HE ASSERTED THE MASPERO REPORT (SEE BELOW) WAS UNREALISTIC. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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4. GARCIA'S OUTBURST WAS UNDOUBTEDLY PRECIPITATED BY MAIRE'S CRITICISM OF THE CLAT AFFILIATE IN CHILE, THE FUT, WHICH HE SUGGESTED SHARED THE BLAME FOR ALLENDE'S OVERTHROW WITH CHILE'S CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. MAIRE SAID THE CFDT CONDEMNED FUT ATTACKS ON ALLENDE'S POPULAR UNITY GOVERNMENT PRIOR TO THE COUP WHICH HE SAID MILITATED AGAINST THE TRANSITION OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM IN CHILE AND CONTRIBUTED TO THE COUP.

5. THE DEVASTATING EFFECT OF MAIRE'S SPEECH SEEMED TO DEMORALIZE THE DELEGATES. AN EMBITTERED MASPERO THEN PROCEEDED WITH THE PRESENTATION OF A SYNOPSIS OF HIS 500 PAGE REPORT WHICH WAS BASICALLY A LONG AND OFTEN REPETITIVE BRIEF FOR THE CAUSE OF THE UNDERDEVELOPED WORLD. WHILE CRITICAL OF INTERNATIONAL

COMMUNISM THE REPORT IN THE MAIN WAS A CONDEMNATION OF THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM IN GENERAL AND THE UNITED STATES IN PARTICULAR. THE "BUREAUCRATS" OF THE "REACTIONARY" AFL-CIO WERE ALSO DENOUNCED FOR THEIR ROLE IN THE GROWING GAP BETWEEN THE "GREEDY RICH AND AFFLICTED POOR."

6. THE MASPERO REPORT, WHICH THE CONGRESS EVENTUALLY ADOPTED WITH SOME MODIFICATIONS, WAS STRONGLY OPPOSED BY THE FRENCH AND WAS COOLLY RECEIVED BY OTHER EUROPEAN DELEGATES, MOST OF WHOM ABSTAINED ON THE FINAL VOTE ALONG WITH THE ASIAN DELEGATES. PRIOR TO THE VOTE, RAMON JABAR OF THE PHILIPPINE F.F.W., SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF THE ASIAN BLOC, ATTACKED THE MASPERO REPORT AS A COMMITMENT TO CLASS STRUGGLE WHICH IN ASIA CONNOTES BLOOD SPILLING. BEFORE BEING ABRUPTLY CUT OFF BY PEPIN HE SAID THAT THE PROBLEMS OF WORKERS IN THE THIRD WORLD COULD ONLY BE SOLVED BY A STRONG, FREE AND DEMOCRATIC LABOR MOVEMENT.

7. THE ELECTION OF MARCEL PEPIN TO THE WCL PRESIDENCY WAS VIEWED BY MOST LABOR OBSERVERS AS AN INDICATION THAT THE WCL WILL NOT SOON DISAPPEAR FROM THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE. IN HIS REMARKS TO THE CONGRESS, PEPIN WARNED THE DELEGATES AGAINST SUBMITTING TO GREAT POLITICAL BLOCS WHICH REPRESENT INSTITUTIONS RATHER THAN MEN. EARLIER IN HIS SPEECH PEPIN CATEGORIZED THE CANADIAN LABOR MOVEMENT AS AN AFFILIATE OF THE AFL-CIO AND THE ICFTU, WITHOUT SCRUPLES AND FAVORING CENTRALIZED BUREAUCRATIC STRUCTURES WHICH CHOKED THE LIFE OUT OF DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNIONISM.

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8. WHILE THE EO-WCL DID NOT HOLD AN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING AT EVIAN AS EXPECTED, THERE WERE DISCUSSIONS AMONG LEADERS OF THE MAJOR EUROPEAN UNIONS ON THE QUESTION OF AFFILIATION WITH THE ETUC. A FINAL DECISION WILL PROBABLY BE TAKEN AT AN EO-WCL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING IN BRUSSELS SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 10. HOWEVER, CONVERSATIONS OF THE MISSION LABOR ATTACHE WITH SEVERAL OF THESE LEADERS AT EVIAN INDICATE THAT FRENCH, DUTCH AND PERHAPS BELGIAN WCL AFFILIATES WILL LIKELY AFFILIATE WITH THE ETUC ON AN INDIVIDUAL UNION BASIS. THESE LEADERS SAY THE EO-WCL WILL NOT CEASE TO EXIST AS A RESULT BUT IN EFFECT WILL BE PERMITTED TO DIE ON THE VINE.

9. COMMENT. THE WCL CONGRESS HAD ALL THE ASPECTS OF A THIRD WORLD NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE WHICH HAD MOST EUROPEAN DELEGATES, EXCLUDING THE FRENCH, IN A QUANDRY. THEY WERE NOT ONLY FOOTING THE BILL FOR THE CONGRESS BUT WERE SUBJECTED TO PROLONGED AND OFTEN VIOLENT ATTACKS ON THE SYSTEMS AND INSTITUTIONS OF THEIR OWN COUNTRIES. RELUCTANCE TO COMPROMISE THEIR PRINCIPLES AND AN ABIDING AND CLEARLY SINCERE CONCERN WITH THE UNDERDEVELOPED WORLD PERHAPS CONTRIBUTED TO THE WILLINGNESS OF THE EUROPEANS TO TOLERATE THE VERBAL EXCESSES OF THEIR LATIN AMERICAN AND AFRICAN BROTHERS AT THE CONGRESS. NEVERTHELESS POST-

CONGRESS REFLECTION ON MAIRE'S REMARKS AND PEPIN'S RIGHTEOUS
EXCLUSIVITY SHOULD NOT AUGUR WELL FOR THE WCL'S FUTURE IN THE
MINDS OF MANY EUROPEAN WCL LEADERS. AN AIRGRAM WITH
CONGRESS DOCUMENTS FOLLOWS. HARTMAN

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